

Better Homes and Centers



Michigan Department of
Social Services

Personnel Matters

Issue 10 Fall 1986

INTERVIEWING, HIRING AND FIRING: MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

*By Joanne Nordstrom, Director
Brucker Community Center
Bridgeport*

One of the most difficult jobs of a Day Care Center Director is choosing the right caregivers to provide quality care for the children enrolled in the center. The staff is an important key to the success of a day care program. The following information is based on personal experience and, hopefully, will help center directors and home providers *make the right choice*.

Finding Applicants:

List your center in the local telephone directory. It is often a good source for bringing in prospects. Any type of advertising about the program will usually spark the interest of some individuals to apply for a position as well.

Perhaps the primary source is through advertising day care vacancies, listing the qualifications necessary. This advertisement can be through local newspapers, colleges and universities, or any other source available to you.

The Application:

The application is an important tool in making the right choice. It helps the director to obtain general information about the applicant and to determine if the applicant is a likely candidate for the interview. Include questions that pertain only to the needs of the center:

- a. Educational background
- b. Work history
- c. Special talents: music, singing, storytelling, etc.
- d. Physical record
- e. References
- f. Criminal history
- g. Availability date

(Continued on page 2)

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Over the past year the media and the legislative bodies have given much attention to the subject of sexual abuse in child care centers and homes. The intention has been to reduce the possibility of children being sexually abused in child care centers and homes. However, one result has been to tarnish the image of child care facilities.

In response to this negative attention, I wrote a letter to area newspapers attempting to put the problem into perspective. I stated that the Department has received and investigated complaints of abuse in less than 1% of all homes and centers. In fact, the vast majority of homes and centers are providing appropriate care.

The fact remains, however, that you as providers must understand that sexual abuse of young children, particularly between the ages of 18 months and 5 years, does occur in centers and homes. Sexual abuse is defined by law as everything ranging from sexual penetration to other forms of sexual activity including such things as fondling and indecent exposure.

The abuser may be a staff member, volunteer or someone who lives in the home. It is your responsibility as a provider to carefully screen employees, volunteers and others who have direct contact with children in your care.

By law the Department must hold the provider/registrant accountable for what happens in the day care home or center. In situations where sexual abuse is substantiated by the police for the Department, an adverse action may be taken which could include revocation of the license or certificate of registration.

A little extra care and attention in the selection of staff or the monitoring of those who have direct contact with children will go a long way in reducing the possibility of exposing vulnerable children in your care to sexual abuse.

Ted deWolf, Director
Division of Child Day Care Licensing

INTERVIEWING . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Screening the Applications:

Screen each application carefully. Content and clarity are very important. Complete and legible indicate that the applicant is organized, neat, prepared and has pride in the work she does. Consider the following questions:

- a. Is the job history stable — not sketchy or erratic?
- b. Does past experience relate to the expertise and education you need?
- c. Why did the applicant leave her last job?
- d. Does the applicant have any physical or health limitations?
- e. Does the applicant have a criminal history and/or object to being fingerprinted?

The Interview:

After screening the application, set up interviews. The interview should consist of three parts:

- a. **Tour and Orientation of the Center:** Introduce the candidate to the present caregivers and inform her of the program content and physical set up. This gives the applicant an understanding of the program and makes the interview more comfortable. Be aware of the candidate's responses both verbal and visual. They may give you a clue to her interest in the center. This is also a good time to make the candidate aware of her responsibilities.
- b. **Interview Questions:** Ask detailed questions relating to the answers on the application:
 1. What specific training have you had relating to child care?
 2. Why do you want to work in a day care center?
 3. What do you have to offer to the program?
 4. What kind of experiences have you had in working with children?
 5. Are you willing to attend training seminars and conferences?
 6. How would your past supervisors or your references describe you?
 7. Include hypothetical situations and see how the candidate responds to them.
- c. **Information Session:** Provide the candidate with information that will be helpful to her in deciding if she is truly interested in the program:
 1. Wage/salary schedule
 2. Work schedule
 3. Physical exam and TB test requirements
 4. Benefits — if any
 5. Notification of employment

Selection of Caregiver:

An important step in the selection is to contact references listed on the candidate's application. Once you have made the decision, adequate training, both introductory and ongoing, will assist in making this person the right choice.

Training:

The type and amount of training that can be offered by a center depends a great deal on the monies and resources available to them. An excellent resource for training is the Child Day Care Licensing staff. Another resource may be the Public Health Department.

Training is important for the new caregivers as well as present caregivers. A new employee should be trained as to the rules and regulations of the program, her responsibilities to the program, center goals, how to work with parents, how to handle problems that may arise in working with children. Include experience working directly with the children.

Incoming caregivers receive the following training in our center:

1. **Incoming interview** — The caregiver receives her "Child Caregiver Handbook" which includes all policies and procedures and center goals. Each item is presented and discussed with the interviewer.
2. **Review tapes** — New caregivers review tapes on a variety of topics.
3. **Hands on training** — The new caregiver is then placed under the direction of a supervisor for a period of twelve (12) hours, broken down into four, three hour days. She gains experience in the infant and toddler program as well as the pre-school program. She is also trained to open and close the center.
4. **Substitute list** — All new caregivers are placed on our substitute list. As a new position opens, substitutes are placed according to seniority and substitute performance.

Termination:

When the performance of a caregiver is significantly detrimental to the operation of the center, and you have exhausted all other corrective measures, termination may be your only option.

Problems in these areas should be well documented and signed by the employee and director.

1. Poor working habits — absenteeism, habitual lateness.
2. Poor job performance — unsatisfactory job completion and performance.
3. Unacceptable behavior — behavior that is detrimental to staff, children or parents.
4. Policy violation — not carrying out policies and procedures as presented in the Caregiver Handbook.

Firing an employee is not an easy job for anybody but dismissal guidelines may ease the process.

1. For working habits, job performance, policy violation:
 - a. First Offense — verbal warning
 - b. Second Offense — written warning
 - c. Third Offense — termination

Each center has its own goals, its own staff expectations and its own budget to consider. The best a director can do is view the different techniques and try one or even design one that may meet the center's needs.

JOB DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION

By Sr. Margaret Marie Clifford, former Business Administrator St. Mary's Child Care Center, Saginaw in collaboration with Gerri Napoli, Director, St. Mary's Child Care Center

Next to the children, the most important component of a Day Care Facility is the Staff! They must be caring, concerned and trustworthy. How do you make it happen? How do you know it happens even when you're not around?

First of all, staff have to know what is expected of them. Every employee has to understand what is to be accomplished, the acceptable ways to accomplish it, and how she will be evaluated. Setting standards, evaluating performance in comparison to the standards, planning for improvement and timely feedback are integral components of assuring quality care.

Setting Standards

Standards are criteria for measuring performance according to state, professional and facility guidelines. A well written job description defines your standards for each position. It should include at least position title, minimal qualifications for education, experience and knowledge, duties and responsibilities, and chain of command. Upon initial inquiry or interview, the applicant knows what you expect to be accomplished. "No surprises" encourages communication and a trusting environment. We expect the staff to relate to parents and children openly. Should we expect the same from ourselves in dealing with our staff.

JOB DESCRIPTION

A good job description includes the following:

1. Job definition
 - Responsibilities
 - Duties
2. Minimum Qualifications
 - Personal
 - Education
 - Experience
 - Health
3. Working Conditions
 - Hours
 - Breaktime
 - Planningtime
 - Leave, absences and benefits as described in Personnel Policies

Frances Goudie, former Licensing Consultant
Oakland County

Evaluating Performance

Once standards are defined in the job description, the next step is to measure actual performance against those standards. When the standards are clear and communicated, the performance evaluation is easier. Gather information for the evaluation on a continual basis, not the day before the evaluation. Document strengths as well as weaknesses. For example, Ann teaches sound nutritional habits by eating with the children and talking about food at mealtimes; Marge was late on March 2, 16 and 28. Specific instances noted as a pattern of behavior reinforce the evaluation process. Don't surprise your employees with the news that a certain behavior is unacceptable for the first time during the evaluation.

Set a specific uninterrupted time aside for the evaluation process. You may want to distribute a copy of the evaluation form to the staff for a self appraisal. In this way, each employee reviews the form prior to the meeting and evaluates her performance against the standards. Sharing this evaluation with you allows you to know how she feels about herself and her performance.

Donald Kirkpatrick in *How to Improve Performance Through Appraisal and Coaching*, 1982, notes the following principles:

- Establish and maintain rapport.
- Clearly explain the purpose of the interview.
- Encourage talking.
- Listen and don't interrupt.
- Avoid confrontation and argument.
- Focus on performance, not personality.
- Focus on the future, not the past.
- Emphasize strengths as well as areas to improve.
- Conclude on a positive note.

Planning for Improvement

When weaknesses are identified, look at them as opportunities for improvement. Be specific in your expectations. Tell employees *who* does *what* *when* and make sure its understood. Telling an employee that her appearance is unacceptable may mean to her that jeans are not acceptable work attire when you're really saying, "I want you to be clean when you come to work."

Timely Feedback

Nothing breeds success like success. When an opportunity arises for complimenting, do it! All of us respond to a pat on the back or a "well done! I really appreciate your concern." Most people are more open to suggestions for improving performance after having received earlier positive reinforcements.

These techniques will help you maintain rapport with the most important component of your child care facility next to the children — your staff.

EMPLOYEES RIGHTS AND EMPLOYERS RESPONSIBILITIES

By Carole M. Grates
Licensing Consultant, Saginaw

Am I violating someone's civil rights by asking about criminal convictions and involvement in abuse or neglect? The Michigan Department of Civil Rights says no!

A *Pre-Employment Inquiry Guide* published by that department lists lawful and unlawful pre-employment inquiries. It is unlawful to inquire about arrest. It is *not* unlawful to inquire about convictions or any pending felony charges.

The guide also says employers may ask for adequate information on employment applications which will aid them in making a good selection. This information must reflect the specific job requirements and pertinent skills required to perform a particular job.

The Civil Rights Act (Public Act 453) prohibits discrimination based on religion, national origin, age, height, weight, sex, or marital status. A spokeswoman for the department made it clear, however, that the Act does not prohibit discrimination based on criminal convictions or involvement in abuse or neglect, especially when the job in question is the care of children.

What do I do when the applicant answers yes to either of these questions?

The best course of action is to offer the person an opportunity to explain the circumstances of the conviction or involvement in abuse or neglect. This should be handled in a face-to-face interview. Remember you are looking for evidence that this person is suitable to provide care that will be beneficial to the welfare of the children in your care.

After the applicant has had an opportunity to present the facts surrounding the incident, you should take the following factors into consideration when making your hiring decision:

1. The circumstances surrounding the incident.
2. The length of time since the incident.
3. The severity of the incident.
4. The evidence of the applicant's rehabilitation.
5. The relationship of the incident to the job as caregiver.

Crimes involving violent acts or threat of violence or involving sexual offenses indicate a lack of suitability. Other crimes may indicate a lack of suitability and you will have to decide each case as it is presented to you.

Careful hiring includes checking references and in-depth interviewing. Investing the time in the initial process pays off in the long run with competent caregiving staff and a quality program.

WHEN YOU ARE THE STAFF

Personnel Management

By Janet A. Everingham
Family Day Care Provider, Ann Arbor

As a family day care provider for the past six years I have found it necessary to institute some way to evaluate myself and my home setting. This has been necessary so that I can measure my effectiveness as a day care provider and improve my program.

When a problem arises in my day care, it is sometimes difficult for me to determine where the problem lies: is it with the child, the provider or the setting? Since I usually work alone and am so close to the children, I find it difficult at times to be objective when things are not going well. For this reason I have found it necessary to include other adults in my family day care on a regular basis. My assistant, other day care providers, and my husband have all played important roles in evaluating my day care home.

My assistant works one morning a week and provides an assessment of the interaction she observes between the children, and gives me an idea on how the children's behavior is different from when I'm around. She also gives me an unbiased opinion on how my own child works in the group.

Planning activities with other day care providers has offered a good way to observe each others' children and the interaction between provider and child. Other providers have helped me look closely at my relationships and attitudes with the children and have helped me solve problems because of the similarity in our experiences. By combining two groups, I have also seen how children get along with new children and with children of different ages. This has been especially helpful with children who have had problems getting along in my day care setting and who do very well in another setting — I then look closely at what is happening in my day care and what I can do to make things better for *everyone!*

My husband perhaps offers the most candid appraisal of my day care. He can gauge how well things are going in the day care by how I am doing. He offers insight into ways to make my job easier and helps me evaluate my role as a day care provider. He knows my day care children well, and he occasionally substitutes for me. This helps give me a break and helps him appreciate the difficult job I have.

Most jobs have a built-in system to evaluate work performance, but in family day care there is no such system. Because I take my job seriously and know my job is an important one, I have found the need to impose some ways of self-evaluation in the day care. At times it has been difficult to accept the "constructive criticism" of others, but by keeping in mind the best interest of the children I watch, I know I need the opinions of others to do this effectively.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON TRAINING

By Carole Grates
Licensing Consultant, Saginaw

Recently staff trainers have been focusing on a new way of training that happens on-site and can be done by the director or peers. The current thought is that such training is more effective than workshops with no follow through.

Effective staff training has three major components: (Johnston, "Assessing Staff Problems," CCIE)

- clearly established goals
- meaningful for the participants
- actively valued by administrators.

Orientation of new staff is critical to a quality program. It helps prevent rapid turnover and encourages consistent programming. Goal setting for orientation is best done by the director and the current staff. Develop a checklist of things to be covered and prioritize it to conform with center goals.

Set aside a specific time for orientation of the new staff so the process is not interrupted. Plan a time for preview of the overall plan as well as time for evaluation at the end. Evaluation time will help participants to both assess how the training was meaningful.

Orientation can be done by using a variety of techniques:

1. Provide a written outline of the orientation procedure. Schedule a tour of the facility, introductions to staff, and time to discuss center goals and philosophy.
2. Invite current staff members to teach a specific area.
3. Provide opportunities for the trainee to observe as well as to participate. An effective method is to have her work closely with a skilled teacher.

Ongoing inservice training can be achieved through conferences and workshops. However, there are two other means of training that have more immediate effect.

1. Plan regular staff meetings with a problem solving format. Encourage staff to identify problems and to work on them as a team. Staff and administrators do not always identify the same problems so be open to all views during these meetings. Such a format encourages peer support and communication.
2. Use a staff meeting to evaluate the program and set goals. Work with the staff to identify areas they would like to improve. As a group, prioritize these areas and establish three or four goals to be achieved.

You can plan an on-site workshop on the areas of concerns. This can be done by an outside presenter or by a staff member who has a special skill in the area. The workshop should include the "why" as well as the "what" of the issue and should allow for active involvement by the participants.

Follow through is important to any workshop. It can be achieved through a good handout for future refer-

ence and by evaluating any implementation of the ideas in staff meetings.

Inservice training that allows the staff to set their own goals will assure a meaningful lasting experience. Whether done on a shoestring or on a champagne budget, the key is meeting the needs of the trainees as they perceive them, not as others perceive them.

References:

Child Care Information Exchange and Young Children, The Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. (See Resources)



EDITORIAL STAFF

Tina Marks	Home Licensing Consultant
Sue Young	Home Licensing Consultant
Sandra Settergren	Home Licensing Consultant
Carole Grates	Center Licensing Consultant
Patricia Hearron	Center Licensing Consultant
Judy Levine	Supervisor

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

*By Margaret Crawley, Child Care Specialist
Ingham County Office for Young Children*

People who care for young children during their formative years have a profound effect on society and the quality of a culture. However, this effect is not acknowledged by a society that views money as the measure of value; child rearing, homemaking and the nurturing arts as less important than productive work; adults as able to measure and control everything and solve all problems. Such values make child care a difficult profession to pursue and limit the tangible rewards.

It is with these challenges in mind that most child care professionals seek training and skill development. Good professional training not only develops skills but provides participants with the opportunity to experience the sharing, support, and the excitement that comes from being part of an emerging profession.

Opportunities for professional development for child care providers in Michigan are available in multiple forms which meet diverse needs. The following list is not all inclusive but gives an idea of the ways in which providers can obtain training.

1 - Organizations

- National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Child care providers can join the Michigan Association at a State level or through local affiliates.

Affiliate representatives are located in the following areas: Central, Greater Flint, Metro Detroit, Western, Northern, Mid-Michigan, South Central, Washtenaw, Ferris Regional Lakeshore. In order to have updated information on names and telephone numbers of affiliate representatives, call Margaret Crawley (517) 887-6996. The Vice President in charge of membership is:

Keith Myers
74 East Hallett
Hillsdale, MI 49242

- Community Coordinated Child Care Associations.

There are 12 4C agencies in Michigan. The 4C agencies are a primary resource for child care providers in terms of newsletters, professional consultation, and workshops.

4C agencies are found in Genesee, Wayne, Grand Traverse, Gratiot, Ingham, Kalamazoo, Kent, Oakland-Livingston, Ottawa, Washtenaw, Upper Peninsula and Saginaw Counties. Contact your licensing consultant.

- Michigan Council of Cooperative Nurseries
Contact person — Kay Conklin
Phone — (517) 835-5672

- Michigan State Cooperative Extension Services
Call your county extension office.
- Local Family Day Care Home Provider's Associations — Contact Margaret Crawley for information in your area.

2 - Newsletters and Journals

- "Better Homes and Centers," Division of Child Day Care Licensing, D.S.S. Free to all licensed or registered day care providers.
- "Offspring," Michigan Council of Cooperative Nurseries, published biannually, Karen Ensminger — (313) 665-8734.
- "Young Children," National Association for the Education of Young Children, published bimonthly. Free to members.
- "The Beacon," Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children, published quarterly. Free to members.
- "Child Care Information Exchange," A journal for child care providers on business aspects. Bimonthly publication.
- 4C newsletters — available by calling local 4C offices.

3 - Conferences, Workshops, Training Sessions

- The Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children has an annual conference previously held at Kellogg Center, Michigan State University. In 1987, this conference will be cosponsored by the Michigan AEYC and the Mid-West AEYC and will be held in Detroit, April 2-5, 1987. The conference organizer is:

Dan Hodgins
5075 Old Franklin
Grand Blanc, Michigan 48439
Phone — (313) 694-2416

- A group of Michigan family day care providers are working on the National Association for Family Day Care Conference in Detroit in August 1987. Plans are well underway for this exciting event. The chairperson of the Conference Planning Committee is:

Gwendolyn DuPree
18428 Birwood
Detroit, Michigan 48221
Phone — (313) 863-5992

The 4C agencies will also have information regarding this conference.

(Continued on page 7)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT . . .

(Continued from page 6)

- The Michigan Council of Cooperative Nurseries sponsors an annual Spring Conference for parents and teachers.
- In addition to publishing newsletters and journals, the Association for the Education of Young Children, through its affiliates, and the 4C agencies provide ongoing workshops and training sessions for child care providers at a local level. Most 4C agencies also coordinate an annual conference at a local level and always have information about other local training such as CPR through the Red Cross or Apnia Monitor training through hospitals.
- Family day care providers can organize local study groups, agree to discuss certain specified topics and find information resources around that topic.
- The State of Michigan provides money specified for child care provider training. Courses and classes are offered in ways which meet expressed community needs and which reflect local resources.

Contractors implementing training are:

Detroit/Wayne County 4C; Grand Traverse 4C; Grand Valley State College; Lake Superior State College; CS Mott Community College; Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency; Ingham County Office for Young Children; Saginaw Intermediate School District; Wayne State University Center for Urban Studies.

4 - Child Development Association Credential (CDA)

Child care providers in both centers and homes can also choose professional growth and recognition through the Child Development Associate Credential (CDA). There are three components of the CDA/Program; the CDA Competency Standards, CDA Training, and the CDA Credential Award System. The CDA Competency Standards are the core of the CDA program. They are a statement of skills needed to be a competent caregiver. CDA training programs are designed to train persons to acquire those skills. In CDA Assessment and Credentialing, the Competency Standards are the basis upon which caregivers are assessed.

The CDA program is administered by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009, phone — (202) 232-8777 or 1-800-424-2460.

Most 4C agencies have information on CDA.

Finally, providers can take time to browse in libraries and watch radio and TV schedules for appropriate programs. Learning is fun and can occur in many places in formal and informal ways.

RESOURCES — PERSONNEL MATTERS

Administering Programs for Young Children, National Association for Education of Young Children.

Cherry, Clare. *A Guide to Day Care Management*, Fearon Publishers, Inc., Belmont, California.

Child Care Information Exchange, P.O. Box 2890, Redmond, Washington 98073.

Day Care Personnel Management, 1979 Southern Regional Education Board, 130 Sixth Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30313.

Family Day Care Exchange, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.
"Family Day Care as a Business," Publication 128d.
"Parent Provider Relations," Publication 128e

Legal Handbook for Day Care Centers, 1981, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201.

Resources for the Family Day Care Provider, Michigan State University, Cooperative Extension Service, East Lansing, Michigan 48824.

The Human Side of Child Care Administration: A How-To Manual, National Association for the Education of Young Children.

There are many government publications that may be helpful to you. You can receive a bi-monthly catalog of new publications if you ask to be put on the mailing list. Write to Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Some publications currently are available.

Caring for Children Series

- HE 21.210: 2 "More Than a Teacher"
3 "Preparing for Change"
4 "Away from Bedlam"
5 "The Vulnerable Child"
8 "From 'I' to 'We'"
9 "Conditions for Learning"
10 "Language if for Communication"

Child Development Series — Day Care

- HE 21.11: 1 "A Statement of Principles"
2 "Serving Infants"
3 "Serving Preschool Children"
4 "Serving School-Age Children"
9 "Family Day Care"

Your Child from One to Six

HE 23.1201:643

Infant Care

HE 21.110:8/2

PROVIDER'S CORNER

Family Day Care Alliance
of Michigan has become
**MICHIGAN FAMILY CHILD
CARE PROVIDER'S ALLIANCE**



Our purposes for organizing include:

1. To promote quality regulated family child care...
2. To meet the needs of Family Child Care providers...
3. to provide an exchange of ideas among persons, agencies and organizations interested in quality family child care.
4. To promote parent involvement in family child care.

We're committed to promoting Family Day Care:

- as quality child care
- as staffed with professionals
- as a great career choice!

To receive a *free* brochure and membership information, contact:

Liz Alery
755 Mooreville Road
Milan, MI 48160
(313) 439-8861

or,

Kathie Spitzley
75 E. 22nd Street
Holland, MI 49423
(616) 396-7548

TAKE TIME TO SMELL THE ROSES

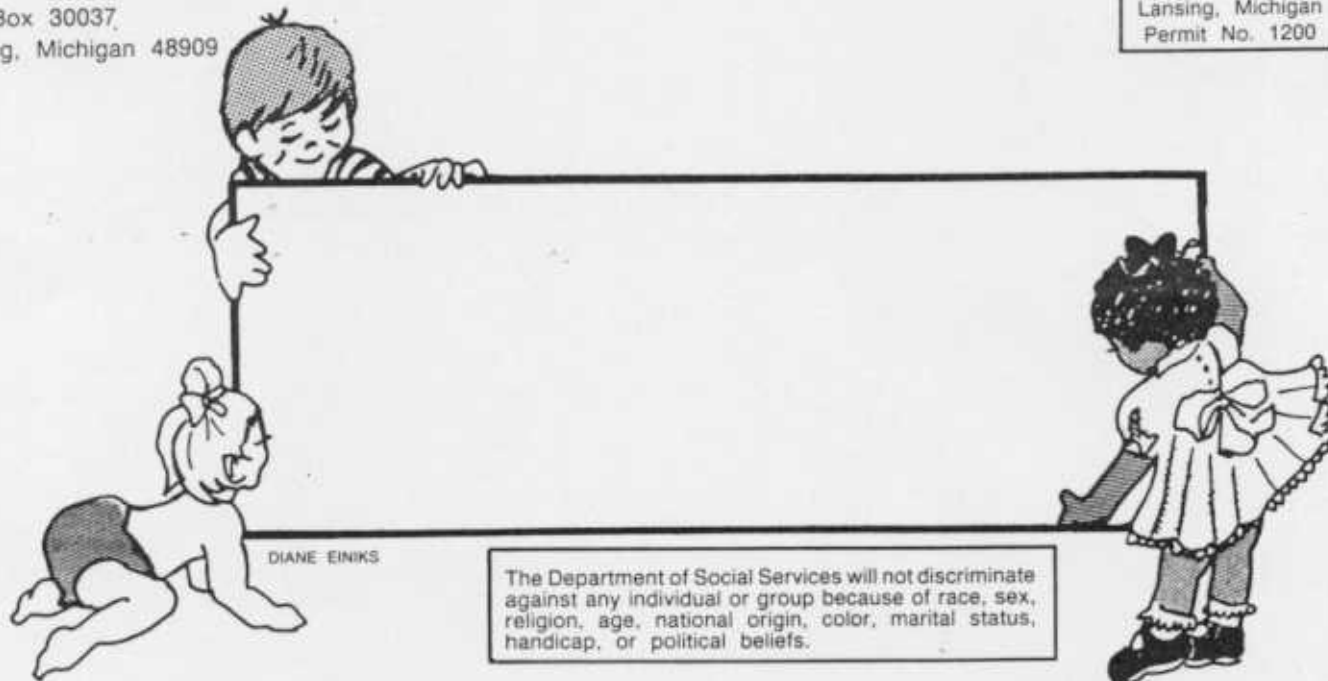
*By Nora Thompson Wadlin
Licensing Consultant, Escanaba*

Child Day Care Providers are constantly working with people — children, parents, peers, employees and employers. Dealing with people is interesting — but, may be stressful. In an effort to free yourself from as much everyday stress as possible, you may be interested in some personal ways to cope with stress:

1. Regular at-home exercise or an active sport.
2. Healthy food intake. Once you have control of your body weight, it's easier to feel in control of your life.
3. Decide what you want to do outside your working hours and stick to it.
4. Make time to talk with family members so each can express frustration constructively when it's "fresh." Be sure you express your own needs and frustrations, too.
5. Use a notebook to plan your day. Refer to your plan throughout the day. Delegate duties.
6. Take time to do something special for yourself! A relaxing bath or a manicure.
7. Write thank-you or "smile" notes to your family and co-workers.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Bureau of Regulatory Services
300 S. Capitol Avenue
P.O. Box 30037
Lansing, Michigan 48909

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Lansing, Michigan
Permit No. 1200



DIANE EINIKS

The Department of Social Services will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, marital status, handicap, or political beliefs.